The Melville Society NEWSLETTER

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All active, paid-up members of the Society receive with this issue copies of three of the papers delivered at the Cambridge meeting of the Society last December. The fourth paper was not available at the time the Newsletter went to press but may be included with a later issue.

1953 MEETING

Plans are under way for the annual meeting of the Society to be held this winter in Chicago. One paper has already been tentatively scheduled, though present indications are that the emphasis will be upon informal discussion and fellowship rather than upon formal academic procedures. Probable day: Wednesday, December 30. Probable hour: 4:00 o'clock. Suggestions are welcomed.

Please note that the proposed hour of the meeting is later than it has been in previous years. This is at the request of several members who have experienced some difficulty in attending both the usual luncheon meeting of the American Literature Group and our own meeting. The luncheon ordinarily is over before three o'clock, so that there should be at least an hour in which to reach the meeting place chosen by the Society.

Arrangements are now being made for a meeting room not too far from the other activities that have been scheduled by the M. L. A. and its sister organizations. Further notices will be sent later in the fall to notify all members of the location selected. Those who do not receive such notice may inquire for directions at the official information desk of the M. L. A.

THE MILK OF CETACEAN KINDNESS

(Or, The Cold War and *Moby-Dick*)

The milk of the whale contains five to six times as much fat and protein as does human milk, a fact which perhaps explains the following news item appearing in the New York *Times* of June 27, 1953:

"The International Whaling Commission, consisting of delegates from the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and fourteen other countries, concluded today a five-day annual meeting devoted to framing an agreement for conservation of whales. Delegates reached unanimous accord on several measures to be taken . . . ." Melvilleans who see Moby Dick as demon will please take note.

—Sidney Kaplan

ANOTHER LITERARY MELVILLE

Stuart C. Sherman kindly brings to our attention a letter published recently in the *Antiquarian Bookman* (1953, p. 1512) which mentions an American writer of the eighteen-forties who used the name "Melville" as his *nom de plume*. According to Clarence S. Brigham, director of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester (Mass.) and author of the letter, the name was used by Josiah A. Fraetas for at least four and probably five novels.

In a prevously unrecorded novel by this author, *Guilford; or, Tried by His Peers* (New York: William H. Graham, 1849), which the American Antiquarian Society has recently obtained, Fraetas included a preface explaining that he had published his previous books (*The Cruiser, The Fatal Legacy, The Master of Langford, Ethan Allen,* and *The Buckskin*) under the pseudonym of "Melville" but that he had now discovered this to be the name of the writer of *Typee*. From this point on Fraetas promised to publish under his own name only.

NOTES

From the editors of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* comes the welcome news that Willard Thorp has recently completed a new biography of Melville for the next printing of that publication. The present article on Melville is only 200 words long and has a number of important errors. The Thorp version will consist of approximately 3,000 words—an im-

provement which all Melville scholars will consider eminently fitting.

At ceremonies held in Albany and Lansingburgh (now North Troy) on June 26, markers were dedicated at the two houses formerly occupied by the Melville family in those cities. The Albany ceremony took place at noon and that in North Troy at four o'clock. State Historian Albert B. Corey presented the markers, which were accepted by Judge Francis Bergan of Albany and Mayor Edward Fitzgerald of Troy, respectively. William H. Gilman spoke at both ceremonies, describing Melville's life in the area and its probable influence upon his art and thought. Among the spectators were Melville's grand-nieces, Miss Agnes Morewood of Pittsfield and Miss Helen Gansevoort Morewood of New York City.

A new drapery fabric in a whaling design featuring Moby Dick, the *Pequod*, a map of Nantucket, and men in a whale boat is being offered for sale by Lansburgh's department store of Washington, D. C. Colors are sand, blue, sea green, and red.

Alfred Kazin and Lawrance Thompson discussed *Moby-Dick* on the "Invitation to Learning" program over a national radio hook-up on Sunday, July 19.

The Warshaw Collection of Business Americana (New York City) reports that it is attempting to learn the drinking habits of well known Americans of the past, and it has recently applied to the secretary for information concerning Melville's preferences in alcoholic beverages.

The Harvard University Press expects to publish *Herman Melville: Cycle and Epicycle*, by Mrs. Metcalf, sometime during the month of October.

On the opening night of *Captain Ahab*, Tyrus Hillway's play based upon *Moby-Dick*, which was presented August 3-15 at the Straight Wharf Theater in Nantucket, actor Russell Gold's artificial leg became unscrewed and fell apart, leaving him in a somewhat awkward position. Equal to the occasion, he shouted for a harpoon and used it as a crutch during the remainder of the performance. The demands of the part (Ahab) proved so strenuous that Gold lost his voice temporarily, so that for two nights the play had to be called off, until he could recover it.

Word has been received unofficially that William H. Gilman and Merrell R. Davis are at work on an edition of Melville's letters for the Yale University Press. It is hoped that there will be further information about this matter in the next issue.

Work (still) in progress: *Doctoral Dissertations on Herman Melville*, by Tyrus Hillway, a booklet listing all dissertations on Melville accepted by American universities and providing abstracts or, when the dissertation has been published wholly or in part, bibliographical references. If this work is completed successfully and proves useful, it is hoped that the same sort of thing may be done for all other important American authors.

President Merton M. Sealts has been spending the summer in Europe and plans to return in October. Following his return, he will spend some time in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Luther S. Mansfield is at present on a tour of European universities and libraries and will not be back in this county until December. The secretary has temporarily lost track of him. Does any member have information about where he could be reached within the next month?

Probable date for publication of the *Moby-Dick Centennial Essays* (Southern Methodist University Press): December first. Price: $3.75.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Executive committee: Merton M. Sealts (1954), president; Eleanor Melville Metcalf (1953); William H. Gilman (1955); Walter E. Bezanson (1956); Harrison Hayford (1957). Membership is two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Associate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, secretary, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.